

City of Auburn

To: Mayor LaBonté and the Auburn City Council
From: Clinton Deschene, City Manager
Subject: Monthly Reporting - *Public Works & Engineering, Parks & Recreation, Economic Development, Library, Assessing, and City Clerk*
Date: August 14, 2012

Public Works and Engineering

- In the month of July the Public Works Department processed 662 Work Orders and closed out 566 work orders with a balance of 96 work orders still open from July. Currently the department has 371 open work orders for the Highway section of PW and 142 open work orders for Fleet section for a total of 512 open work orders.
- Early July - the crews were working in preparations for the July 4th celebrations. A City-wide clean up was coordinated by PW and Parks.
- Roadside mowing operations were ongoing throughout the month. We organize our mowing schedule by plow routes for better planning and to systematically address our roadside maintenance responsibilities.
- Cleaning of basins was ongoing throughout the month.
- Recycling operations 44.47 tons of mixed materials were collected in July (4 tons more than July 2011). Previous Months totals were: June = 52.87 tons, May= 54.1 tons, April = 45.02 tons. All were above last year's totals.
- Tree trimming operations systematically managing the City Forest by trimming/cutting. Plow routes are utilized to schedule/manage cutting. Areas trimmed/cut include: Allen Ave area, Lake St, Vernon, Old Danville, Pownal, Radio Tower sites, Field Ave, Main St, Broad St, Oak Hill Cemetery, Stanley, Sunderland Dr., Gamage, Perkins Ridge, Mt. Auburn, and Riverside.
- Paving and patching crews are in full swing during the summer months. Some areas worked include but not limited to: Park Ave, Vickory, Goff St., Western Prom, Lake St, Broadway, Third St, Derosay Ave, Ninth St, and a Pownal Rd box cut.
- Roadside ditching and shoulder work included the following areas: Witham Rd, N. Auburn Rd., Poland Rd, Old Danville Rd, Maple Hill, Dillingham, Lake St., Merrow Rd, Vickery, Library Ave, Minot Ave, S. Main St., and Rodman Rd.
- Culvert replacements, Catch Basin Repairs and sinkhole repairs: Mill St, Jordan School Rd, Pownal Rd, Chicoine ave, West Hardscrabble, Poland Rd, Fairway, Merrow, Giroux, South Witham Rd, Hampshire st, Rodman Road, Derosay Rd, Atwood St..

MONTHLY REPORTING

8-14-12

- Grading of gravel roads continued into July due to heavy/wet June we completed grading on Hatfield Rd and Wyman Rd.
- The department continues to battle with beavers throughout the City. We have numerous sites where beavers dam up culverts and are causing flooding. A Beaver Deceiver design was created and several prototypes have been fabricated by the PW Welder. These are to be installed in the upcoming weeks to determine the effectiveness of the design.
- The sign crew has been creating/installing special sign requests, repairing and fixing damaged signs as well as systematically replacing all the out of compliance street signs throughout the City. Per MUTCD Section 2D.43 all of the City's street signs need to be reflective and flat.
- CDBG Sidewalk Project: Project nearly complete, punch list items remaining.
- 2012 Paving Project: South Main Street, Sunderland Dr, and Weatherly Pl. complete. Turner Street to begin approx. Sept. 1.
- 2011 Neighborhood Reconstruction Project (Winter, Summer, and Dennison): Drainage structures, box cut and 90% of base course complete. Currently working on sidewalks, granite curb and driveways. Surface pavement on Winter from Vining to Dennison and Dennison from Winter to Gamage will be postponed to Spring 2013 in order to allow the Water District to complete their work.
- 2012 Neighborhood Project (Cleaves and Old Farm Hill): Installation of drainage structures 50% complete. Anticipated completion of October 15, 2012.
- 2013 Paving Contract (Hotel, Trapp, Manley and Twin Roads): Advertised for bid on August 13, 2012.
- 2012 Crack Seal Program: Low bidder selected, project to be completed Summer/Fall 2012.
- 4 private development projects currently under construction: Panera Bread, Central Maine Credit Union, Main St. Housing, and Tambrands.
- Maine DOT conducted field reviews for the TIP projects on Tuesday, August 7th.
- Park Avenue Road and Pathway construction nearly complete. Surface pavement is scheduled for the week of August 13th but is weather dependent.
- Hotel/Minot Avenue Intersection Improvement Project has started. Drainage work is complete on the in-bound side of the street with paving expected the week of August 27th also weather dependent. After paving the contractor will be working on the out-bound side of the street.
- Work is on-going to try and be able to claim some of the money that was awarded to the City in a grant for Great Falls Plaza prior to the grant expiration on September 19.

Parks and Recreation

- July brought to us a month of great weather with warm days and perfect conditions for outdoor programming. Our summer program offerings continued and maintenance tasks such as sweeping, raking, weeding, litter patrol, graffiti removal, mowing and field lining are in full swing. Summer day camp, track and field, adult softball and community band concerts continued, as golf lessons came to an end.
- Our biggest recreation program, summer day camp, continued throughout the month. Day camp offers a structured program environment with activities from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., 5 days a week for an 8 week period of time. Three days each week, campers take part in organized activities, games and arts & crafts. One day each week, campers take part in a beach day. The Kindergarten through 3rd grade group attends the Wednesdays-In-The-Park program every Wednesday and one day each week is a special event/excursion day for both camps. **This year there are a total of 252 children enrolled in the day camp program.**
- This month, the Parks department focused maintenance efforts on the July 4th Liberty Festival, as well as, cemetery maintenance. In addition to these tasks, routine week-to-week maintenance occurred on City parks, medians, esplanades, flower beds, common areas, the Municipal beach and athletic fields. Tasks performed included: mowing, raking, weeding, trimming, litter removal, hardscape repair and field lining & dragging.

Economic Development

- Completing a land swap deal with the owner's of Rolly's Diner which ensures the viability of the business, and helps the city complete a plan for an urban riverfront walkway in New Auburn.
- Completed a land sale of a tax-acquired parcel of property on Minot Avenue.
- Continuing work towards the development of a twin-rink ice area in the Auburn Mall area:
 - Drafting and revising the terms of a lease with the developer
 - Working out the terms of financing and the rent payments
 - Attending meetings with the Masonic Group on the possibility of participating in the project.
 - Making contact and conferencing with representatives of with Shaw's Realty Co.
- Obtaining approval of Auburn's Downtown Tax Increment Financing District, and beginning the process of amending this district.
- Meeting with officials from the U.S. Economic Development Administration regarding the terms of the grant award for the new Auburn Industrial Park.

MONTHLY REPORTING

8-14-12

- Keith McBride attended a 3-day training presented by the U.S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development on the use of CDBG funds for economic development.
- Roland Miller attended a 3-day training seminar presented by the U.S. Economic Development Administration on economic development programs.
- Participating in a new Workforce Development Group with the Lewiston Careercenter, LAEGC, AVCOG, the Chamber of Commerce and others.
- Attending meetings of the Androscoggin County Building Committee to discuss a potential improvement plan for the County Building.
- Attending meeting of the Lewiston Auburn Railroad Co Board, at which a variety of subjects were discussed, including sewer easement for the proposed Riverview housing development on Main Street, continuing work on the Rangeley Branch, Grand Trunk Depot redevelopment, and others.
- Working with Engineering and Community Development on gathering materials and information for a grant application for the completion of a New Auburn greenway/riverfront walk.
- Working with Engineering, Planning, Public Works and the City Manager on exploring the use of funds earmarked for the construction of a parking structure in Great Falls Plaza for other infrastructure improvements in that area.
- Meeting with representatives of Lost Valley Ski Resort on the future of their facility and property.
- Meeting with the Great Falls Development Group on the acquisition of property in New Auburn, and the City's role in that transaction.

Library

- The Library's new Teen and Collaboration Librarian, Joyce Doyle, started work on August 7. Joyce was previously the Teen and PR Librarian in Missoula, Montana. She replaces Sally Holt who left to become the Director of the Raymond Public Library.
- The Library Board of Trustees began creation of a new Strategic Plan on August 9. The three-year plan will be shorter term than previous "long-range" plans in recognition of the rapidly changing library environment. The Trustees will hold a second planning meeting on August 30.
- Construction of the new grant-funded Media Lab began August 9. We hope to have the Lab up and running by mid-September.
- Chapman House has informed Library Board President Dick Trafton and Library Café proprietors Bill and Daphne Berta that they will be closing the parking lot at the corner of Court and Spring Streets on September 1. This will affect the Library and create an

existential hardship for the Café which has relied on the lot for customer parking. We are working with the City to identify possible alternative parking solutions which will come before the Council at some point.

Assessing

- We have completed the commitment of values for tax year 2012/2013 and we are working closely with the tax collector to ensure that the total valuation numbers balance so the tax bills can be issued. The mil rate for tax this year has been set at \$19.59 per thousand dollars of assessment.
- Over the last couple of weeks we have been working on the 2012 Municipal Valuation Return for the Maine Revenue Service. The City's total taxable valuation dropped \$48,073,944 from 2011. The homestead reimbursement to the city increased by \$483,250 as a direct result of mailing 589 applications out this spring to homeowners who may have qualified. The last time we did a large mailing to possible qualifying homeowners was in 2007. The personal property business equipment tax reimbursement to the city increased by \$27,254,500 from 2011. This indicates the local businesses are still investing in new machinery and equipment despite the difficult economic times we are experiencing.
- Last tax year we processed 111 real estate and 24 personal property abatements. Of the 111 real estate abatements 21 of them were commercial properties:

ABATEMENTS			
Year	Abatements	Value	Taxes
2008	104	\$6,897,888	\$126,990
2009	135	\$11,763,000	\$215,415
2010	112	\$9,682,800	\$186,878
2011	135	\$6,135,100	\$118,960

- The number of deed transfers has remained somewhat stable over the last year. This is a direct result of our current economic environment. We are finding that there is an oversupply of properties listed for sale on the market and those properties are staying on the market for periods of time well beyond a year. There is an adequate supply of bank owned properties, foreclosures and short sales listed for sale on the market. Property values are forecasted to stabilize once the absorption of the current inventory takes place.

City Clerk

- We are gearing up for the November General Election. Applications for absentee ballots became available on Monday, August 6, 2012, although the ballots will not be available to be sent out until 30 to 45 days before the election. We've already received 8 requests.
- We received 257 Voter Registration Applications from a voter registration drive on 7/26/2012 and all have been entered into CVR (Central Voter Registration System).
- We are close to completing the 1st supplement to the new Code of Ordinances and are in the proofing stages right now.
- We have a new employee starting in the Clerk's Office on the 20th of this month. Alison Pepin has accepted the License Specialist position. She has previous Municipal experience as Deputy Clerk, Deputy Registrar, Deputy Tax Collector/Treasurer, and General Assistance Administrator for the Towns of Woolwich and Bowdoinham. I am very excited to welcome her to our team.
- Milestones: The end of August marks 5 years that I have been with the City of Auburn.